and knee space to permit easy movement of wheel chair, wider berths, toilet adapted to needs of such passengers, arrangements for securing wheel chairs during the journey etc. Some such disabled friendly coaches are already in service. It has been decided to provide one such coach in every mail/express train during next two years.

(b) and (c) Disabled friendly coaches bear relevant signage and marking notice on the coach body.

(d) Computerised Passenger Reservation System automatically allots lower berth to the handicapped persons performing their journey on handicapped concessional ticket and middle/upper berths near the handicapped person to the person accompanying them as escort, subject to availability of such berths at the time of booking.

After departure of the train, if there are vacant lower berths available in the train, and if any physically handicapped person booked on the authority of handicapped concessional ticket, who has been alloted upper/middle berth, approaches for allotment of vacant lower berths, the Conductor/ Train Ticket Examiner (TTE) has been authorized to allot the vacant lower berth to them making necessary entries in the chart.

Malpractice in reservation of tickets

1934. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware about malpractice in respect of reservation of tickets for trains;

(b) if so, the steps taken/proposed to be taken by Government to remove such malpractice for the protection of passengers to fully utilize their reserved seats/berths in the trains; and

(c) by when such instructions would be issued/implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Some cases of malpractice in respect of reservation of tickets for trains in connivance with touts do come to notice.

(b) and (c) Regular and surprise checks are conducted in association with Vigilance to curb malpractice in and around reservation offices. During peak rush periods such checks are intensified. Strict disciplinery action is

taken against the staff found indulging in such malpractice. In addition, touts apprehended are prosecuted as per provisions of law.

Committee for passenger amenities at Station

1935. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railway platforms and railway compartments are in a very poor state of hygiene and taps are dry both on the platforms and in the bogies, thereby causing a lot of inconvenience to the passengers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Railways propose to appoint a Committee to go into these problems and to suggest ways and means of improving the sanitation conditions on the Railways; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Cleanlines and maintenance of amenities including tap water supply at stations and trains is a continuous process and is carried out regularly and any deficiency found is promptly attended to for rectification. Regular inspections are conducted at railway stations and trains to monitor and identify weak areas and take remedial measures.

(c) and (d) Besides regular checks, there is a system of periodic inspections by multi-disciplinary Service Improvement Groups of appropriate level to monitor upkeep of amenities including cleanliness and take immediate corrective action. Suitable action is taken against the staff/ agency who are found wanting in the performance of their duties for maintaining proper cleanliness at railway stations and trains. At present there is no proposal for appointment of a committee.

Incidents of robbery and terrorism in trains

† 1936. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a spurt in the incidents of robbery and terrorism in the trains during the recent past;

(b) if so, whether Government would taken any action to check the incidents of robbery and to get rid of the difficulties having faced by the

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi